

## Pig Farming

By Eva Oxborrow Johnson

This is pig scraper It is what we used for the pig. This would scrape the hair off the pig after you would get the pig out of the lye water. The lye would loosen the hair and then you would scrape the hair.

To take care of the pig, you have your barrel of water with lye in it after you had shot the pig in the forehead. Just .22 it right there. And then we had a big platform like this that was wooden. The pig would drop on that and then you would take the back legs and push him down there into the barrel...back and forth and back and forth until the hair would come off.

And then when the hair comes off, you would start with the pig scraper. And it gets all the dead hair off. And that was the best time for me because that's when we got our football. And believe you me, you could kick them and they never would break. You would just hang them up to dry and they was just as solid as they could be. And I was telling this one time and this lady said, "What, the pig's bladder?" And I said yes and she said, "Ooooooh". I said, "don't oooh me, I had too much fun with it."

But the best time that we had to help was when we killed the pigs. Oh, I loved that time. We had to haul all that water and put it in the boiler room, and let it boil. Let it get hot and then pack it out and that barrel went down like this—you would have to push the pig down in lye water to get the skin off.

And when Dad would clean them, he would give Mama the bladder of those pigs. She'd clean them and get a straw out and blow them up and hang them up to dry. We could kick them and play with them and they never would break. That's where we get the pigskin name from. We'd play with them all the time and that was a good time for us. We had to work to get the water and the wood to heat them and everything, but it was a good time.

But Uncle Harry Manning would cut them up for us. Mama would make a big pan of Yorkshire ducks about that size for everybody. Yorkshire ducks was from the liver and the vale. You'd just cut the vale in a piece like that, put your liver in there and salt and put all the spices in there and fold it and bake it. There were those three families and we would all get a pan of that.

We would kill our pigs in the fall. Mother would cure them in salt and brine. She would cure them in a big wooden barrel. These would be down in the cellar.